Wastage of foodgrains in jute packing

2249. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to refer to the reply to Unstarred Question 2380 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 8th August, 2002 and state:

(a) whether Government have since implemented the steps to minimise transit losses such as complete switchover to 50 kgs. (or less) packing and improvement in size and quality of jute bags;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have also procured Non-jute bass such as PP/HDPE Woven Sacks of 50 kgs. (or less) to reduce both cost and losses in packing of foodgrains; and

(d) if so, the quantity thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) Yes, Sir. With effect from Kharif Marketing Season 2002-2003, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) has completely switched over to 50 kg. packing norms. With a view to minimize losses during transit due to spillage of grains from side seams, the provision of safety union stitch in the jute bags have been made by the FCI.

(b) With a view to further improve the quality of bags and to amend the existing Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) of jute bags, certain studies in respect of tolerance limit on allowable defects, sampling, criteria for conformity for jute bags/fabrics and for fabric faults have been conducted.

(c) and (d) No, Sir.

Diversion of foodgrains by FCI

2250. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the findings of the probe into diversion of wheat meant for the consumers to the traders by the Food Corporation of India in Haryana;

(b) the details of the *modus operandi* of the scandal;

(c) the quantity and value of wheat diverted to traders, the Monetary loss suffered by FCI and the estimated profits made by the traders by selling this wheat at exorbitant prices; and

(d) the action taken against the concerned officials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) to (d) Food Corporation of India (FCI) sold a total quantity of 29.14 lakh MT of wheat in the open market at prefixed rates in Haryana during October, 1993 to April, 1997. With a view to ensuring that the wheat sold in the open market was made available to the local people, the stocks were released to traders after obtaining an affidavit from them to the effect that they would not sell the stock outside the revenue districts to which they belonged. These traders sold the stocks to other parties within the same revenue districts. The buyers of wheat through this second sale, who were technically not bound to the affidavit given by original buyers, sold the stocks of wheat to parties outside the States.

The officers of the FCI were suspected to be involved in the above diversion of wheat to the open market and the matter was referred to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) who have completed their investigation in all the six cases registered in this behalf. CBI have already filed chargesheet in the appropriate Court of Law in two of the cases and closed one case. In the remaining three as recommended by CBI, disciplinary action has been initiated. However, in one case no action could be taken against an officer who had already been dismissed. The FCI did not incur any financial losses on this account since wheat under the Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic) was sold at rates fixed by the Government from time to time.

Central teams to enquire starvation deaths

†2251. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.